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Antique Dolls

Brenda Sneathen Mattox

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INTRODUCTION

Whether you are a doll collector or hobbyist, or simply find the appeal of a well-made doll irresistible, you will find Brenda Sneathen Mattox's crisp, clear renderings an inspiration to color. Her artistry has captured the lively beauty of these antique dolls of the 19th and early 20th centuries. Represented on these pages are the French companies of Jumeau, Gaultier, Steiner, and Bru, as well as the German manufacturers Simon and Halbig, Kestner, and Kämmer and Reinhardt.

The French Jumeau dolls are among the most desired of all antique dolls. Pierre François Jumeau founded his company in Paris in 1842. A son, Emile, took over the company after his father's retirement. Under Emile's direction, a child-like doll was developed, in contrast to the more traditional "lady" doll. These new dolls, known as "Bébés," had bisque (unglazed china, a strong, natural-looking material) heads that could be turned from side to side, and fully jointed "composition" bodies made of materials such as paper, wood chips or pulp, and glue molded together to form body parts. Some Jumeau dolls had features such as pierced ears, a wig made of real hair or mohair, and moving "paperweight" eyes made of paperweight-type blown glass. Sizes ranged between 10 and 32 inches tall. Jumeau dolls were awarded numerous prizes in international competitions from the 1860s to the 1950s.

Many dolls produced in the second half of the 19th century had as much attention paid to their clothing as to their manufacture. The growth of the fashion industry in the 1860s and 1870s prompted dollmakers to compete in offering the latest in dress styles and hairdos. A painstakingly handmade lined silk or finely woven wool dress was a typical feature of these European dolls; hand-stitched pleating and correctly constructed undergarments were quite common as well.

Many antique dolls can be found today in private collections; others are on view in museums. There are many books available on the subject, as well as doll societies and clubs. Hopefully, this book will inspire you to seek out other sources regarding these precious, expressive creations, beloved and appreciated by so many.

NOTE: Without actual markings indicating when and by whom a doll was made, and in the absence of price tags, packing boxes, or original advertisements or catalogs, the origin of a particular doll can only be guessed. In addition, many dolls were made of parts from different manufacturers. When available, the name of the manufacturer/date of manufacture is given in this book. Some dolls are "in the style of" a particular manufacturer but cannot be authenticated.

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Portrait doll, Jumeau, ca. 1860s.
Portrait painting, popular in the early 19th century, influenced dollmakers in Europe.

Jumeau, ca. 1880s.
Note the painstakingly detailed eyelashes, a common feature of French and German dolls of the time.

Jumeau, ca. 1890s.
Many Jumeau dolls were displayed in a variety of activities, such as knitting, eating chocolate, conducting music, reading a book, or playing an upright piano.

Jumeau, ca. 1900s.

"Long-faced" Jumeau.
Known in French as "Jumeau Triste" [sad], this type of doll appeared in the 1870s and 1880s. The name refers to the doll's serious, thoughtful expression.

Bru-type doll, ca. 1860s.

Bru lady doll, ca. 1870s.
"Kissing" and "whistling" Bru dolls were two of the innovations of this French company.

"Black Bru," ca. 1890s.
Before the 1900s, an "ethnic" doll was typically a standard head tinted to a darker skin color. Faces occasionally were modeled more accurately.

François Gaultier-type lady doll, ca. 1870s.
The "lady" doll was often distinguished by its narrow waistline and rounded bosom.

Bisque, François Gaultier, ca. 1880s.

French bride and groom, ca. 1850s.
These dolls were constructed of papier-mâché
They are dressed in silk and wool costumes.

"Princess Alice" poured wax doll by Madame Montanari, ca. 1855.
Dollmaker Augusta Montanari produced dolls of the royal family;
this doll is believed to represent Queen Victoria's third child, Alice.

French lady doll, ca. 1865.

Bisque-head lady doll
with molded collar, ca. 1870.

French fashion doll, bisque, ca. 1870s.
Used to display fashions of the times, these dolls were "dressed" by specialty craftsmen such as lacemakers, wigmakers, and even jewelers.

French fashion bride, ca. 1870s.

French walking doll, ca. 1880.
These dolls had mechanisms that enabled them to "walk."
Some dolls were designed so that the head moved as the doll walked.

Bisque "Googly" doll, c.a. 1900s.
"Googly" or "goo-goo" eyes lent this type of doll an impish expression.
The German dollmaker Armand Marseille produced many "goo-goos."

Simon & Halbig, c.a. 1890s.
This German firm produced a high-quality
ivory finish to the bisque.

Standing doll: Simon & Halbig;
seated doll: Kestner. Ca. 1900s.

"Elise," Kämmer & Reinhardt "character" doll, ca. 1900s.
A character doll expresses individuality. Some character dolls are based on an actual person; others embody a personality as envisioned by the designer.

Kämmer & Reinhardt, ca. 1920s.
This company operated the largest doll factory in Germany. It later merged with Simon & Halbig.

Bisque, Steiner, ca. 1860.

Steiner, ca. 1890.

German china doll, ca. 1840s.
It is possible that this is a portrait doll of the great German ballerina Fanny Elssler.

China lady doll, German, 1887.

Kestner, ca. 1900s.
J. D. Kestner produced highly prized bisque dolls.

Child: German, ca. 1880s;
mother: German, ca. 1860s.

Left: China-head lady doll;
right: untinted bisque, possibly C. F. Kling & Co.